

The Prisoners Remonstrance.

To the right Honourable, the Lord Generall
Fairfax, and to his Councell of War, to all the Officers
 and Souldiers of the Army, and to every Free-born
 Commoner of England.

The humble Remonstrance and Complaint of all the Prisoners of this Nation
 for Debt, in the severall Goales and slaughter-houses of this Land.

*LAM. 1. 2. She weepeth continually in the night, and her tears run down by
 her cheeks, among all her lovers, she hath none to comfort her, all her friends
 have dealt unfaithfully; and are her enemies.*

IT hath been, and still is as the ardent desire, so the great work
 & labor of some eminent persons in place & authority, though
 not in goodnesse and reputation, to render odious the honest
 and integrall party of this Nation, (especially you who have
 endeavoured so much for the publike, without hope of remedy)
 to redresse or ease, by misrepresentations of all their just causes and
 actions, to undermine that credit and honourable respect, which
 God the Fountain of all Justice and mercy is pleased to attribute
 unto his beloved Ones, the poor oppressed and despised people of
 this Nation; but Councells too subtile and forced, use oftentimes
 to produce contrary and unthought of ends; but as God makes
 us instrumentally subservient to his will, in the transactions of his
 provisionall determinations, so we ought laboriously to endea-
 vour and stand fast in all just and rightfull oppositions, to such con-
 trary interests and proprieties, as neither by the Law of Creation,
 or nature was ever imposed on us: and as the Gospel of Christ
 giveth liberty and freedom in the inward man, so by the rule of
 proportion, as well as by the same Law, our bodies and outward
 man, should receive and be invested with the like priviledges and
 prerogatives; but man hath resisted his Maker, the clay hath said
 to the Potter, *why hast thou made me thus?* although (saith he op-
 pressor) God be a God of order, and not of confusion, although his
 Government be principled upon the foundation of mercy,

A

and

and Justice towards the sons of men, yet will we alter the frame of his Government : and whereas he hath given us the hearts of Lambs, and harmlesse Doves, *we will not have this man rule over us, but we will serve the God of this World*, and according to his nature, assume the cruelty of Tygers, Wolves, Beares, Lyons; this is the cause why a man ruleth over another to his own hurt : and hence it is, that disorders, warrs, tumults, seditions, strife, envy, hatred, murther, tyranny, oppression, servitude, imprisonment, and all such cruelties, are exercised towards men ; and the more the God of darknesse ruleth in the spirits of the *children of disobedience*, there certainly men become more impudent in wickedness ;

Jer. 5. 35. *Their Judges judge for a reward, their Prophets prophesie lies, and the Priests receive gifts in their hands, and the people delight therein, our Magistrates establish iniquity, by a Law, they overpasse the deeds of*

Jer. 5. 28. *the wicked, they exercise no judgement, no not the judgement of the Fatherlesse*; and therefore as the Lord, in the visitations of Jerusalem, *Ezech. 9. 4.* set a mark upon the foreheads of them that mourned and cryed for all the abominations that were done in the midst thereof; so we are assured that the God of this world hath set a mark on the right hands, and on the foreheads of them that worship the beast and his Image, *Rev. 14. 9. 10.* and we are perswaded that the buying and selling, and grinding the faces of the poor, and sending and giving gifts one to another, is to us an external manifestation of this outward mark, and impression in their foreheads, and in their hands. *These shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, they of the pure wine, which is poured into the cup of his wrath*

But above all the inhumanities wherewith this distressed Commonwealth is now incombred, there is none exceeds either for termlesse durability, endlesse misery, or height of torment, that this involving of our persons (which are the Temples of the Holy Ghost) into miserable and transcendent slavery, to be incaged in such loathsome dens, and hatefull dungeons, amongst horrible stinks and noysome vermine, which challenge the whole world, and every Commonwealth of this Univerle, and every distinguished member thereof, to give in but one parallell comparable to those horrible Parisian massacres and murders, cruelties and barbarities, which are exercised on the persons of men imprisoned for debt in this our English Nation; besides the every way unlawfullesse, and disusage of this action in all other Countries, Christian or Pagan. A Sessions or Goal delivery puts an end to the

tears

fears and expectations of Murtherers and Traytors, but what Law Mat. 25.
 or what person relieveth a man imprisoned and in bonds? the Law 41, 42, 43
 which should have been his antidote, is become his poyson, and
 the Judges, the interpreters thereof are become his hangmen; nay
 our very Law-makers decree wicked decrees, and write grievous
 things, by keeping back the poor from judgement, and by taking Jer. 10. 12.
 away the judgement of the poor of this people, that widdowes
 may be their prey, and that they may spoil the fatherlesse, the sta- Isa. 10. 1, 2
 tutes of *Omri* are kept, and all the manner of the house of *Ahab*, Mica 6. 16
 and they walk in their Councells; therefore they shall beare the
 reproach of this people: the statutes and decrees of the Norman
 Conqueror, and his Successors are still observed, and the
 bastards yoke of slavery continued unto us and our posterity:
 those Iron fetters which should have been removed, and those li-
 berties, which with so much blood and wealth we have regained
 are still denyed, and instead thereof, endless imprisonment, he-
 reditary imprisonment is entayled unto us and our posterity for e-
 vermore. And now notwithstanding, the late many years restlesse
 labours and endeavours of the poor prisoner, and his fellow la-
 bourers in this our English Vineyard, for liberty and freedome,
 notwithstanding the many solemn Engagements, Oaths, Promi-
 ses, Vowes, and Declarations of this present Parliament in gene-
 rall, and of every individuall Member thereof in particular, not-
 withstanding the numberlesse Petitions and endeavours of all par-
 ties and interests in so just a cause, notwithstanding there want-
 eth nothing at this present for the passing of that laudable Act
 for our release, yet by the malevolent influence, and supernatant
 power of the Lawyers it is still obstructed, and by an overpotent
 hand more then ordinary pressed, and repressed by it, that some-
 thing may be found therein pretendedly consequentiaall and un-
 seasonable, and so be made liable to a new Commitment, and our
 prosecutors deterred and overthrown in their apprehensions of a-
 ny future perfection and accomplishment thereof. Yea our condi-
 tion is yet more deplorable, by reason of their resolvedness and vi-
 olent nature, not at all to be moved by the complaints of those, Psal. 12. 2.
 who seek redresse at their hands; so that now deprived in a man-
 ner of all hope (which is usually a comfort to those in affliction)
 we are become so much the more sensible of the hardnesse of our
 present condition.

It were endless to remonstrate unto you, the many severall
 A 2 orders

and Justice towards the sons of men, yet will we alter the frame of his Government : and whereas he hath given us the hearts of Lambs, and harmlesse Doves, *we will not have this man rule over us,* but we will serve the God of this World, and according to his nature, assume the cruelty of Tygers, Wolves, Beares, Lyons; this is the cause why a man ruleth over another to his own hurt : and hence it is, that disorders, wars, tumults, seditions, strife, envy, hatred, murther, tyranny, oppression, servitude, imprisonment, and all such cruelties, are exercised towards men ; and the more the God of darknesse ruleth in the spirits of the children of disobedience, there certainly men become more impudent in wickedness.

Jer. 5. 35. *Their Judges judge for a reward, their Prophets prophesie lies, and the Priests receive gifts in their hands, and the people delight therein, the*

Magistrates establish iniquity, by a Law, they overpasse the deeds of the wicked, they exercise no judgement, no not the judgement of the Fatherlesse; and therefore as the Lord, in the visitations of Jerusalem, *Ezech. 9. 4.* set a mark upon the foreheads of them that mourned, and cryed for all the abominations that were done in the midst thereof; so we are assured that the God of this world hath set a mark on the right hands, and on the foreheads of them that worship the beast and his Image, *Rev. 14. 9. 10.* and we are perswaded that the buying and selling, and grinding the faces of the poor, and sending and giving gifts one to an other, is to us an external manifestation of this outward mark, and impression in their foreheads, and in their hands. *These shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, even of the pure wine, which is poured into the cup of his wrath.*

But above all the inhumanities wherewith this distressed Commonwealth is now incombred, there is none exceeds either for termlesse durability, endlesse misery, or height of torment, than this involving of our persons (which are the Temples of the Holy Ghost) into miserable and transcendent slavery, to be incaged in such loathsome dens, and hatefull dungeons, amongst horrible stinks and noysome vermine, which challenge the whole world, and every Commonwealth of this Univerle, and every distressed member thereof, to give in but one parallell comparable to those horrible Parisian massacres and murders, cruelties and barbarities, which are exercised on the persons of men imprisoned for debt in this our English Nation; besides the every way unlawfullesse, and disusage of this action in all other Countries, Christian or Pagan. A Sessions or Goal delivery puts an end to the

team

fears and expectations of Murtherers and Traytors, but what Law
 or what person relieveth a man imprisoned and in bonds? the Law
 which should have been his antidote, is become his poyson, and
 the Judges, the interpreters thereof are become his hangmen; nay
 our very Law-makers decree wicked decrees, and write grievous
 things, by keeping back the poor from judgement, and by taking
 away the judgement of the poor of this people, that widdowes
 may be their prey, and that they may spoil the fatherlesse, the sta-
 tutes of *Omri* are kept, and all the manner of the house of *Ahab*,
 and they walk in their Councells; therefore they shall beare the
 reproach of this people: the statutes and decrees of the Norman
 Conqueror, and his Successors are still observed, and the
 bastards yoke of slavery continued unto us and our posterity:
 those Iron fetters which should have been removed, and those li-
 berties, which with so much blood and wealth we have regained
 are still denyed, and instead thereof, endlesse imprisonment, he-
 reditary imprisonment is entayled unto us and our posterity for e-
 vermore. And now notwithstanding, the late many years restless
 labours and endeavours of the poor prisoner, and his fellow la-
 bourers in this our English Vineyard, for liberty and freedome,
 notwithstanding the many solemn Engagements, Oaths, Promi-
 ses, Vowes, and Declarations of this present Parliament in gene-
 rall, and of every individuall Member thereof in particular, not-
 withstanding the numberlesse Petitions and endeavours of all par-
 ties and interests in so just a cause, notwithstanding there want-
 eth nothing at this present for the passing of that laudable Act
 for our release, yet by the malevolent influence, and supernatant
 power of the Lawyers it is still obstructed, and by an overpotent
 hand more then ordinary pressed, and repressed by it, that some-
 thing may be found therein pretendedly consequentiall and un-
 seasonable, and so be made liable to a new Commitment, and our
 prosecutors deterred and overthrown in their apprehensions of a-
 ny future perfection and accomplishment thereof. Yea our condi-
 tion is yet more deplorable, by reason of their resolvedness and vi-
 olent nature, not at all to be moved by the complaints of those
 who seek redresse at their hands; so that now deprived in a man-
 ner of all hope (which is usually a comfort to those in affliction)
 we are become so much the more sensible of the hardnesse of our
 present condition.

It were endlesse to remonstrate unto you, the many severall
 orders

orders and exprestes that have issued out unto a selected Committee of that House, for a speedy dispatch; and drawing up of an Act for our release, and how many severall times it hath been imprisoned, and recommitted again upon meer delusive objections, on purpose to protract the miseries of the afflicted; what a profound diseased Lethargy did it fall into about the year 1642. from whence it received a resurrection & reviver in the year 1645. since which time, it hath been tossed like a giddy ball from one hand to another, by the Members of that house to this day, sometimes awakened with a suddain Alarum of pretended rights, and again laid asleep as oppressed with too much watchfullnesse, untill at last it fell into the hands of Col. *Martin*, and from him to Col. *Rigby*, which for some amendmets was recommitted; after that into the hands of Mr. *Lechemore*, where it was like to have been buried in everlasting silence, but after many long demurres, it was recommitted to Col. *Rigby*, who after some amendmets, reported the same unto the House, yet by Mr. Speakers obstruction (as Mr. *Lechemore* affirmed) it received a new Commitment (poore thing, for its faults no doubt as well as the poor prisoners) and committed it into the hands of Mr. *Reynolds*, who by the former unnecessary delays spun out the length and time of the last Terme in promises, and repromises, Protractions and Rejoynders, whereupon on the 17. of July last, M. *Whitlock* made some objections against it, and upon his motion it was referred to a new Committee, where Colonel *Martin* had the Chaire, who on the 23. of July reports the same into the house again; but it was then ordered to be reported on Friday afterwards, thereupon the 27. of the same moneth (after the report & reading thereof) it was again recommitted into the hands of M. *Martin* and Mr. *Fell*, who reported the same into the House the third of this instant August, but it was put off untill Munday afterwards, and on the seventh of this moneth againe reported, and againe delayed untill the morrow morning but not reported untill the eighth of this moneth; whereupon the House made two severall Orders: First, for a Commission of *Grace*, for the release of such as cannot pay their debts, and that M. *Garland* do bring the same into the House the next morning which is not yet performed; the other was, that after the first and second time reading of the Act, it was again recommitted to the same Committee, who were ordered to sit *de die in diem*, and

to report the same with speed, and yet that Committee hath never met at all unto this day, and we are confident never intend to doe; Gentlemen, what shall we say unto you? the potency of the Marshall of the Kings-Bench, M. Speakers elder brother, the power of the Warden of the Fleet, with the same person, and all Lawyers is so great, and their bribes so large, that we feare some persons have seen a vision of Angells lately, upon which two wheels of the Kings-Bench and Fleet, the very doores and orb of this Common-wealth doth move, and turneth round, and from which is extracted in one yeer out of prisoners pockets many thousand pounds, to the upholding of that wretched and abominable kingdome of contention and oppression in the Law, as the *Puteus inexhaustus* of this Nation, a well that can never be drawne dry.

It were innumerable to reckon up the many Petitions and Addresses, which have been made by the imprisoned Souldiery unto the House of Commons in this nature, and to their Committees, Sub-Committees, the Councell of State, the Committee of Indempnity, by Letters, Advocates, Suits, and unexpressible humilities and demonstrations of our endlesse groans and miseries, wherein we are become the unmerited objects of scandall and contempt, and our persons exposed without remedy to the mercilesse rage of many hard-hearted persons, whose revenge would reach those black Parliamentary objects sitting in the clouds, if they were within the compasse of their power, wherein our misery is yet more lamentable, that we who have undergone the utmost of all dangers for them, and in whose service we have consumed and spent our estates, and lost the dearest blood of our selves, children, brothers, cousins, and friends, in their cause, yet we are left naked, open and bare, and exposed to the mercy of a malignant crew of infernall Machiavells, notwithstanding the many Contracts, Vowes, Oaths, Declarations, and promises of protection from their revenge: and although we are become Creditors to this Parliament in such large and ample sums of money in severall loans and various debts accruing and depending upon our service, since the transaction of these bloody warres.

Gentlemen, we desire you to consider, that all Lawes are comprehended under a threefold division: 1. The Law of Nature. 2. The Law of God, of Faith, or of the Gospell. And 3. The Law

Fig. 82. to the end.

Bracton.
See the
Plea of the
Crown,
1. p. 31.

Law of Man, made upon the dictates of right reason: The Law of Nature requireth of us, not to do that to another man, which we will not have done to our selves, to render to every man his owne, and to confirme and distinguish his inheritance, birthright, propriety and possession; the Law of God is a law of love, upon which principle all Statutes, Acts of Parliaments, and Constitutions, made and used for the Government of the people are founded, and whatsoever is against this Law hath ever by the worthy Sages of our Law been declared void. Thirdly, the Laws of men and the Municipall Lawes of this Realme have not their progeny from men, *Alured, Alfred, Athelstan, Edmundus, Edgar, Canutus, Edward the Confessor, Henry the first, called Beuclerke,* were the chiefe promoters of many necessary and good Lawes, yet if we looke into them, we shall find that most of them have their originall from a higher power, even from the Law of God, and of Faith; and although Historians to please the Successors and lovers of the Norman yoke and tyranny, write that the originall of our common Lawes flowed first out of Normandy, yet that is not true in generall; for although the Conqueror introduced severall Lawes from thence, yet seeing that the spirits of the English would not be bounded within such unnaturall Privileges, without a bloody and uncertain war, was content to suffer the English Saxon Lawes to remain in force, and be hereditary to the Common-wealth of England, amongst which all imprisonments for debt was utterly against the great Charter of the English Liberties, and never came in force but in speciall cases, untill *Henry* the seventh and eighth introduced on the freedome of the people by a prevailing party of wilful Lawyers, since which time our fundamentall Lawes and Liberties have been trampled on, and as the Proverb is, lie now in water, and as *Tully* said of the Senate of Rome, we have Lawes only written in Tables, like a sword in a sheath, the people being governed by others wills, and not by publike Lawes; if we should trace now our English Lawyers through these foundations, we should hardly discover any footsteps of them, *who having forsaken the right way have gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bolor, which loved the wages of unrighteousnesse, 2 Pet. 2. 15.* And therefore Gentlemen, it is the desire of our soules that you will begin at last to weigh the state of your owne affaires, and considering the proceedings of the present government, to resolve no longer to stand

Mirror of
Justices,
made by
Andrew
Horne.

Mirror of
Justices, p.
27. 28. 29.
30. 192.

by
ren
Na
cip
for
to a
eru
Cou
the
you
selv
ceiv
mor
you
eyes
you
oncl
A
cers,
we a
view
requ
that
had
whic
this b
have
their
cond
such,
like v
ger v
in for
ed, an
ing g
fion
(like
to be
ry to
for th

by asidle Spectators of your owne disgraces, but find out some remedy for the time to come, in the behalfe of this distressed Nation, which may recompence our past losses, and stop the precipice of our future ruine, which we see so undoubtedly lie before us: and let our humble, yet honest Counsellors exhort you to abandon the society of self-interests, and factions, and not so cruelly wound and rend asunder the bosome of your owne Countrey, the welfare whereof you are obliged to maintain with the hazzard of your owne persons, even to the last period of your lives; and how great a glory will it be for you to purge your selves from those jealousies the people have so wondrously conceived of your inclinations & proceedings, & you will merit much more of your Countrey by this so pious a resolution, then by all your former actions put together, though seeming in your owne eyes never so glorious and beneficial; for this will bring safety to your persons, and satisfaction to your soules, whereas those add only greatnesse, reputation and uncertainty to your affaires. Ezek. 16. 7
Esa. 58. 6.
7, 8.

And therefore Gentlemen, amongst the many Remonstrancers, who with their desires have presented themselves unto you, we are bold to intrude our selves unto your sight and publike view, desiring you to consider that amongst the many honourable requests which the Irish Officers made unto the House, one was, that prisoners for debt might bee released, who we are sure had the same consideration and fellow-feeling of our miseries, which themselves in particular might one day participate of, if this burthen were not taken off, whose estates, trade and means have been totally consumed in the service of the State, as well as their brethren, which are now in prison, whose present desperate condition and the forlorne and abject hopes of their affaires is such, that they are inforced to remonstrate to you, and the publike view, their unparalleled cruelties and oppressions, as not longer willing tacitely to be the causers of their owne woe, where in some of us your Souldiers and Officers are now close imprisoned, and have been shot at, and extremely abused otherwaies, in being guarded through the streets, as in the time of the high Commission & Star-Chamber, in a most shameful and disgraceful manner, (like Murtherers and Traytors) to the Committee of Indempnity, to be examined upon Interrogatories against themselves, contrary to the very Order of the House, onely for appearing active for the passing of this laudable and truly Christian Act of Mercy, and.

and Humanity. Seeing therefore life is denied us, the precious jewells of our beings, our liberty detained from us, and our persons thus subjected unto endlesse slavery, and oppression, we invite you, and beseech you, as you tender the honour of Almighty God, and the welfare and liberty of this oppressed Nation, to assist us in these our just desires: and do implore you all, and every member of this honourable society, every faithfull and well principled Souldier, and all that love the peace and freedome of this Nation, to stand up as one man in the defence of your poor afflicted brethren, and not suffer the many hungry and unpitied cries, and dying groans of your fellow-brethren and souldiers in prison, still to call for justice, and without speedy remedy to draw down some heavy judgement from the God of heaven on this whole Nation, that so we may be freed from the power and tyranny of our unmerciful Depositors, and hard-hearted Goaler, that all *Capias's* in Law for the future may be taken off, and excessive Fees, and Chamber-rents mitigated, and reduced to the forme and modell of the ancient Statutes of this Kingdome, desiring you to consider also, that whatsoever crosse or calamity hath now befallen us, may indanger, if not totally subvert, your persons, reputations, callings, families, and estates, the succeeding day and houre at hand to come. If there be therefore any fellowship of the Spirit in you, if any bowels and mercies, thinke upon these things, and the God of mercy, peace, and perfect liberty be with you all. Amen.

*From our close imprisonments in the severall
Dungeons and Goals of this Land, August
20. 1649. the first year of Englands declared
liberty. but of our further and perpetu-
all bondage and slavery.*

FINIS.